

New Remo Products

Constantly a source of new percussion products, Remo recently introduced two more inventions to the drum world. The first is a new line of drumheads, called *Falams K-Series*; the second is a new percussion accessory item called *Spoxe*. In both cases, the product is a result of taking a new look at existing technology in order to create something useful and interesting.



Falams K-Series Drumheads

With the *Falams K-Series* heads, Remo has deviated a little from the company's work with *Mylar*, and has started to produce heads utilizing *Kevlar*. (The name *Falams K* comes from FABric LAMinate *Kevlar*.)

Kevlar is a synthetic material, often used in bulletproof vests. Duraline once offered *Kevlar* drumheads, but one of the main problems with them was that the open weave of the fabric caused brushes to get hung up. Besides that, the *Kevlar* material was not weatherable. Remo has solved these problems by tri-laminating these new heads; that is, bonding the *Kevlar* between two film layers of *Mylar*. The toughness of the *Kevlar* is combined with the stability and all-weather performance of *Mylar*.

A new flesh hoop was designed for the *Falams K* heads, utilizing a steel reinforced aluminum counterhoop, and a crimp system of mounting. Remo claims that the chance of head pull-out is now practically nonexistent, which is important since the *Falams K-Series* heads were originally developed as marching heads. Today's marching drummers use extremely high tension levels, and the *Falams K* heads can be tightened to a point where they resemble a tabletop, if desired. However, the heads are also very strong and durable—in fact, almost indestructible. Given this characteristic, Remo has also chosen to market the heads to rock and studio players.

Five types of *Falams K* heads are presently available: coated, smooth white, and natural, as well as smooth and natural with a clear center dot. The heads I tested were the super-weight models, but I'm

told that medium and light weights will be produced in the future. Also, at the moment, only 14" and 15" sizes are available.

There are a few physical differences between the *Falams K-Series* and the "regular" Remo heads. The *Falams K* has a lower profile, and its collar edge forms a less acute downward angle; it has a more rounded slope. Also, the new counterhoop is shallower. These factors combine to allow the head to sit lower on the drum.

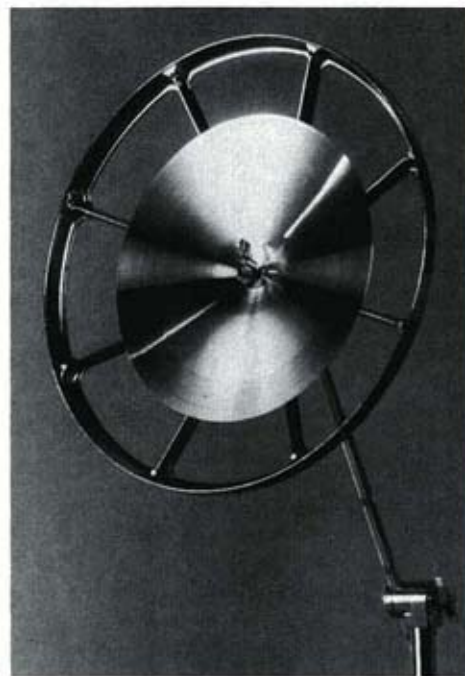
The surface of the coated white head is similar to that of other coated Remo drumheads, if perhaps not as rough-textured. I did find that the coating seems to wear off quickly. The coated *Falams K* head reacted crisply when played with brushes, and had a bright sound and good attack with sticks. I tried it on both a 5 1/2 x 14 wood snare drum and a 7 x 14 fiberglass drum, and was pleased with the resulting sound on both. The natural *Falams K* has a clear smooth film layer on both sides, allowing the *Kevlar* fabric to show through. I consider this more of a "rock" head. It had a slightly deeper sound, but still offered ample brightness and more than enough volume. The addition of a clear center dot to the natural head served to lessen over-ring and strengthen the impact area even more.

Due to the strength of the *Kevlar* material, the new *Falams K* heads resist denting, and seem to have exceptional durability. (I'm told that Ricky Lawson used the same snare batter for 18 Michael Jackson shows!) While the *Falams Ks* perform at their best in high-tension situations, they're stronger than *Emperors* or *Pinstripes*, and still have good tonal qualities—giving them a potential place as rock or studio batters. The *Falams K-Series* drumheads range from \$34.00 to \$38.00.

Spoxe

Remo's newest accessory instrument is called *Spoxe* (rhymes with jokes, folks). The *Spoxe* is a round, chrome-plated metal casting, resembling the bottom part of a RotoTom. (In fact, I think it is the RotoTom bottom!) It's available in eight sizes, from 5 1/2" to 19 1/2" in diameter. When struck, the smaller *Spoxe* produce a bell-like tone; the larger ones sound like resonant chimes. They are not tuned to notes, but are extremely cutting and pure.

So now, what can you do with them? I



mounted a pair of 11 1/2" *Spoxe* onto a hi-hat stand, and got quite an interesting sound when played by the foot pedal—perhaps approaching the sound of huge, amplified finger cymbals. Closed, the *Spoxe* hi-hats have a pretty bizarre metallic sound. For some reason, I'm reminded of the cheap hi-hat sounds on the first rhythm boxes.

Played alone, the 5 1/2" *Spoxe* yields a great bell-cymbal sound. Striking the top edge gives a more staccato sound than playing the side, so you actually get two sounds for the price of one (and maybe more!). Since the pitches lower as the *Spoxe* diameters increase, it's possible to mount all eight sizes on one stand, creating a "tree" on which to glissando or perhaps play abstract melodies. Another use could be to loosely mount a cymbal upside down inside one, so that the cymbal reacts when the *Spoxe* is hit, or vice-versa. I found this to deaden the cymbal sound immensely, and from the "safety" aspect I'd probably only want to mount an inexpensive cymbal inside a *Spoxe*.

All this from a RotoTom casting? I wonder why it was never thought of before. Individual *Spoxe* range in price from \$18.00 to \$75.00. Remo's new idea is an interesting one, with many experimental possibilities. *Spoxe* are not for everyone, but if you want a different sound available in your trap case or percussion bag, they will certainly provide it for you.

